

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 055266

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, US, UK, IO

SUBJECT: GUARDIAN ARTICLE ON DIEGO GARCIA

THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO OUR PRESS
PEOPLE FOR USE IN THE EVENT THEY ARE ASKED ABOUT THE
"GUARDIAN" ARTICLE SUGGESTING THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT
MIGHT WITHDRAW ITS SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF
FACILITIES AT DIEGO GARCIA:

Q. THERE HAS BEEN A "GUARDIAN" ARTICLE SUGGESTING THAT
THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS, MAY HAVE
DECIDED TO WITHDRAW ITS SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED EXPANSION
OF FACILITIES AT DIEGO GARCIA. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT
HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THIS?

A. DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UK OVER THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF
DIEGO GARCIA BEGAN UNDER THE PREVIOUS CONSERVATIVE GOVERN-
MENT. WE WOULD EXPECT, OF COURSE, THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT
UNDER PRIME MINISTER WILSON WILL BE REVIEWING ALL FOREIGN
POLICY MATTERS. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THEY WOULD BE ABLE
TO REVIEW THE DIEGO GARCIA PROPOSALS IN THE NEAR FUTURE,
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BUT WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT OVERALL BRITISH

INTERESTS HAVE CHANGED WITH THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT.

2. "GUARDIAN" REPORTS WERE RAISED AT NOON PRESS BRIEFING TODAY. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN USED ESSENCE OF GUIDANCE ABOVE. QUESTIONER PERSISTED BY ASKING ABOUT US-UK DISCUSSIONS, AND DEPT SPOKESMAN NOTED BRITISH AMBASSADOR RAMSBOTHAM HAD HAD RECENT CONVERSATION WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH, "AND I ASSUME...THEY RAN OVER THE WHOLE RANGE OF FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES WHICH BOTH OF US ARE INTERESTED IN, BUT I DON'T THINK IT WAS MENTIONED AS A MAJOR ISSUE." FURTHER PRESSED ABOUT THE UPSHOT OF THE BRITISH REVIEW, SPOKESMAN SAID "...AND AS I HAVE SAID, WE WOULD HOPE THAT THEY WILL, AFTER THEY FINISH THEIR REVIEW, REAFFIRM THE PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDING." "Q - HAVE THEY ASKED, OR HAVE THEY NOTIFIED THE US THAT THEY ARE REVIEWING ANY OTHER FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS? A: I HAVE NO INFORMATION ON IT. I DID LOOK INTO THE MATTER; THE WAY THIS STORY CAME UP, I LOOKED INTO THIS CASE AND I CAN'T GIVE YOU ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BECAUSE OF THAT. Q: THERE IS ALSO PENDING, AT LEAST OFFICIALLY IN THE LABOR PARTY'S MANIFESTO, THE INTENTION OF CLOSING OUT THE US POLARIS BASES. YOU DON'T KNOW WHETHER THIS WAS RAISED IN THIS CONTEXT? A: NO, I DO NOT. HOWEVER, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WE KNOW THAT YOU HAVE TO GO VERY PRECISELY ON WHAT THEY RAISE IN A FOREIGN POLICY SENSE, AND THIS IS THE ONLY ONE I'M AWARE OF THAT HAS BEEN RAISED SO FAR."

3. FYI, WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE ABOVE AS WELL AS THE REPORT WITH THE BRITISH EMBASSY, WHO HAVE TOLD US A) THE FOREIGN OFFICE IS GOING ON THE RECORD WITH A FLAT DENIAL OF THE VERACITY OF THE GUARDIAN ARTICLE, AND B) A DENIAL THAT AMBASSADOR RAMSBOTHAM HAS PASSED ANY MESSAGE SUCH AS THE ONE REPORTED IN THE GUARDIAN ARTICLE ON TO THE USG. END FYI. KISSINGER

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